

## 2. Basic Information on Programmes and Courses

### 2.1 Research postgraduate programmes

The Graduate School offers through 61 Graduate Divisions a total of 99 research programmes as of September 2025, namely those examined by scrutiny of an extended research dissertation and an oral examination and are leading to the degrees of Ph.D., D.Mus., M.Phil., M.F.A., and M.Mus., with details below:

Doctoral programme	Ph.D.	25
	D.Mus.	1
Master's programme	M.Phil.	26
	M.F.A.	1
	M.Mus.	1
"Articulated" M.Phil.-Ph.D. programme		44
"Articulated" Bachelor-Ph.D. programme		1
Total		99

New programmes may be proposed by Graduate Divisions/Faculties or initiated by the University in accordance with its strategic development. Such initiative may be triggered by intellectual pursuits, international and societal developments, academic advancement, technological breakthrough, or available resources. Graduate Divisions may also propose changes to existing programmes/courses to refresh or revitalise them. There are well-defined guidelines and procedures and a schedule for submission of programme proposals which are available on the Graduate School website.

### 2.2 M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes

Any Graduate Division that has an M.Phil. and a Ph.D. programme may choose to convert to the articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes. New programmes should adopt the new system.

The framework of articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes introduces more flexibility in the entry requirement for Ph.D. programmes, and at the same time imposes formal candidacy requirements. It also brings more uniformity in the programme structure and requirements in order to enhance quality assurance.

Students applying for admission to articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes should state their intention to pursue either an M.Phil. or a Ph.D. The minimum requirement for admission to an articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programme is the same as that for an M.Phil. Programme. Graduate Divisions will steer applicants into the appropriate stream, according to their academic qualification, research ability, potential and interest.

More information about the articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programme can be found in Section 6 of this document.

### **2.3 Strategic goal statement for research postgraduate programmes**

As a comprehensive research university, the University places special importance on the RPg programmes offered through different Graduate Divisions. RPg programmes should be pursued with the following strategic objectives:

- (a) RPg programmes aim to deliver scholarly values at the quality level of a first-class university. They should be fully in line with the strategic goals of the University as well as the Faculty and Department.
- (b) RPg programmes have the objective to train first-class researchers who attain national and international leadership positions in their respective fields and who advance scholarly knowledge with the ultimate goal to serve the society.
- (c) RPg programmes should serve as a two-way link between the University and society. They are expected to incorporate knowledge gained through research conducted at the University and at other places. At the same time, they should disseminate knowledge developed and advanced at the University so as to improve the reputation and the standing of the University locally, regionally and internationally.

Policies and plans for RPg programmes should be formulated with these objectives in mind.

### **2.4 Graduate attributes of research postgraduate programmes**

The University has clear expectations of the attributes of its graduates. The RPg programmes aim to educate researchers to embark on careers that will allow them to become world leaders in their fields, working as university professors, principal investigators in research institutes, senior managers in enterprises, or experts in other professions related to the pursuit and application of knowledge.

Doctoral degree graduates are expected to have acquired in-depth knowledge in a number of major areas of an academic discipline while maintaining a broad understanding of other related fields. They should have accumulated enough educational experience and background learning to be capable of performing independent research to advance scholarship, with global standards. In particular, they should have the ability to identify research trends and opportunities, venture into new research areas when appropriate, define long-term research objectives, formulate original research problems, and originate and develop solution methodologies. They should be capable of producing research output at a level that can lead to publications in high-ranking scholastic venues, or to novel applications in relevant industrial, commercial, or other public sectors, or to other forms of useful knowledge transfer to society. They should have gained proficiency in techniques of knowledge dissemination through presentation and writing and some teaching experiences through student tutoring.

Master's degree graduates are expected to have acquired advanced knowledge in major areas of an academic discipline while maintaining a broad understanding of other related fields. They should have gained enough background knowledge to enable them to perform research with minimal supervision. In particular, they should have the ability to formulate individual research tasks and develop solution

methodologies under minimal supervision. They should also be capable of producing original, innovative research output, some of which may lead to publication in well-respected scholastic venues. They should have gained proficiency in techniques of knowledge dissemination through presentation and writing.

For graduates of both research doctoral and master's programmes, communication and language skills at a level appropriate to university graduates are expected already at the time of admission. In particular, fluent communication skills are expected in the language(s) essential to their research areas. In general, a high level of proficiency in English is expected as it is commonly regarded as the default international research language. Ability in a second language is encouraged. They are also expected to attain appropriate life-long self-learning skills.

Postgraduate students are expected to possess attributes of holders of first degrees obtained from the University or other leading tertiary institutions in domains such as academic honesty, personal integrity, critical and independent thinking, communication and language skills, global vision, desire to serve the society, and others. Whole-person development therefore does not form part of the formal educational objectives of most postgraduate programmes offered at the University.

## **2.5 Modes of study**

The mode of study of a postgraduate programme may be full-time or part-time. Unless otherwise specified, classes of part-time programmes may be scheduled in day time as for full-time programmes. Part-time students have to make their own arrangements to attend day-time classes.

Application for change of study mode is allowed only within the student's normative period of study and must be recommended by the Graduate Division and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

The remaining normative and maximum periods of study for students who change the study mode are computed based on the following principle of ratios of time spent by part-time students as compared with full-time equivalents:

- (a) 2/3 for M.Phil. students during the normative study period;
- (b) 3/4 for Ph.D. students during the normative study period.

Conversion tables are published in the *Postgraduate Student Handbook* for easy reference. Continuing students, i.e., students beyond the normative study period, are not allowed to change their study mode.

## **2.6 Jointly supervised research postgraduate programmes**

Committed to providing world class education and training to researchers, CUHK Departments and Faculties are keen on forming jointly supervised research programmes with strategic research partners outside Hong Kong. Such collaborative programmes are proposed or formed based on, amongst a number of driving factors, the strength and reputation of the partner institutions, alignment of strategic goals, and availability of resources. Some features of these collaborative programmes are described below:

- (a) The partner institutions are research organisations of distinguished standing and of strategic alliance value to CUHK.
- (b) Such programmes are for Ph.D. students only.
- (c) Each student should have a CUHK Supervisor. CUHK encourages the appointment of qualified Co-supervisor from the partner institution which will be considered on a case-by-case basis subject to the existing CUHK regulation. Researchers from the partner institution could not serve as external examiners for the student's thesis.

Students who wish to find out more about these collaborative programmes may inquire with their Supervisors/Graduate Divisions.

## 2.7 Courses

An RPg programme is made up of courses on specific topics. Courses could be lectures, tutorials, laboratory work, seminars, studio-based, field studies, meetings on research progress, etc., which carry a different number of units. Although research programmes emphasise mainly research and laboratory activities, there are not less than 12 units of course requirements for students of articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes.

Courses are broadly divided into taught courses and research courses. A typical 3-unit taught course is made up of a two-hour lecture and a one-hour tutorial per week throughout a teaching term (the number of hours students spent on out-of-class self-studying is not included). For research courses, arrangements on duration, meeting frequency, and venue are usually made between the student and his/her Supervisor. The general rule is that each unit of course is regarded as equivalent to approximately three hours of study/research per week by the student.

The fundamental concepts and key principles covered by each course are listed in the course outline. The content specification is not exhaustive. Learning outcomes, i.e., capabilities, knowledge, and skills students expected to have developed during the course, are clearly specified in the course outline.

## 2.8 Course code and sequence

Since 2010-11 the course code comprises four letters and four numerals. The first four letters stand for the subject (e.g., BIOL for Biology) and the first numeral stands for the level of study. Undergraduate courses are coded 1000 to 4000 while postgraduate courses are coded 5000 to 8000. Details are given below:

<u>Level</u>	<u>Definition</u>
5000	Postgraduate Diploma/Master's courses
6000	Advanced Master's courses
7000	Doctoral courses
8000	Thesis Monitoring courses, e.g., Thesis Research courses for articulated M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programmes or Thesis Monitoring courses for other M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes.

Lower level courses should normally be taken before upper level courses. However, some flexibility is allowed through opening most courses to students of all years subject to satisfactory fulfilment of prerequisite and co-requisite requirements, unless otherwise stipulated by the Programme.

As resolved by the Senate, double-coding of a single course is not allowed.

## **2.9 Cross-institutional course sharing**

In order to enhance RPg students' access to educational resources available elsewhere in Hong Kong, local universities funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) have entered into collaboration to share RPg courses. Students from UGC-funded universities are able to benefit from the exposure gained from the joint teaching offered by collaborating universities and interaction with students from other institutions. There are two such collaborative schemes:

### **(a) Cross-Institutional Course/Subject Enrolment Scheme**

Participating universities are CityU, CUHK, EdUHK, HKBU, HKU, HKUST, LU, and PolyU. Students who are interested in taking courses offered by other local universities through this Scheme may visit the Graduate School website for announcements regarding courses available for enrolment for each term (<https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/page/CrossInstitCrsRPg>).

### **(b) Joint Centre for Advanced Study**

The Joint Centre for Advanced Study (JCAS) is a joint effort among CUHK, HKU, and HKUST in developing greater and deeper collaboration in response to UGC's initiative in the development of strategic alliances and deep collaboration in higher education. The first initiative under this umbrella is the joint offering of courses for RPg students. Courses in Chemistry, Molecular Medicine, and Mathematics have been offered.

Students who are interested to join may consult their Graduate Divisions.